REMARKS / ARGUMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

In the office action dated January 16, 2004:

the inventor declaration was rejected because it did not identify the address of the last inventor, John Bailey;

claims 1-2, 4-7, 14-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. patent no. 6,052,683 to Irwin (hereafter "Irwin");

claims 18-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Irwin;

claims 12-13, 29-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Irwin in view of U.S. patent no. 6,567,408 to Li *et al.* (hereafter "Li");

claims 8-11, 25-28 were allowed;

claims 3, 20 were objected, although allowable if rewritten in independent form including base claim and intervening claim(s); and

various claim language was objected to based on various informalities.

B. SUPPLEMENTAL DECLARATION

Please find enclosed herewith a newly executed declaration by the inventor John Bailey to replace the prior declaration that was defect with respect to John Bailey alone.

C. AMENDMENTS

Applicant has incorporated the features of previously allowed claim 3 with claim 2 into claim 1. Thus, 1 is allowable as is claims 4. Claims 2 and 3 are canceled.

Independent claims 5, 12 have been amended to clarify the invention with a "recursion indicator" not present nor suggested in the prior art. While Examiner stated that the leading bit(s) of a media access control (MAC) address used to signal the *category* of address—class A through class E—is an "indicator" (office action, page 6, lines 14-19), Applicant respectfully asserts that leading bit(s) is not a "recursion indicator" as used in

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the present invention. As indicated in Irwin, the leading bit(s) is used to define the ratio of network address to host address and apply the proper mask (col. 3, lines 60-62). Independent of the actual address class, the leading bit(s) is always applied to the search tree in Irwin. The leading bit(s) merely dictates which branch of the tree is searched until the longest matching prefix is found or the absence of a matching entry is determined (col. 8, lines 64-67; and FIG. 5). In contrast to Irwin, the recursion indicator of the present invention is a variable that causes the search to either continue or terminate the search. Since the indicator may terminate a search, it may be used to **prematurely end a search prior to the detection of the longest prefix match**, which is explained in the application at page 6, lines 19-27. Since Irwin fails to disclose or suggest a recursion indicator, independent claims 5, 12 and dependent claims 6-7, 13 are allowable.

Independent claim 14 has been amended to clarify the invention including the nickname bit count present in previously allowed claim 3. Thus claims 14-17 are allowable.

Independent claim 18 has been amended to clarify the invention including the nickname bit count present in previously allowed claim 3. Thus claims 18, 21 are allowable.

Independent claim 22 has been amended to clarify the invention include a "**recursion indicator that: indicates the return of the packet processing data**" and prematurely "**terminate**" the "**flow properties ... lookup.**" Thus claims 23-24 are also allowable for the reasons stated above.

Independent claim 29 has been amended to clarify the invention including an "**indicator to denote whether the data comprises: a nickname ... or packet processing data,**" which is not present nor suggested in the prior art. Thus claim 30 is also allowable for the reasons stated above.

D.   CLAIM OBJECTIONS—INFORMALITIES

Examiner has objected to claims 1, 4-5, 9-11, 14, 18, 21-22, 26-28 on the grounds that these claims include informalities. Applicant, however, declines to amend these claims because these claims are definite under 35 U.S.C. §112. While Examiner may be unfamiliar with such claim drafting style, such a style provides an efficient and compact means for particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming what Applicant regards as the invention.

E.   CONCLUSION

For all the forgoing reasons, Applicant submits that the present invention is patently distinguishable from Irwin and Li either alone or in combination. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §132 and 37 CFR §1.121, Applicant has exercised care to avoid the introduction of new matter. Should there be any fees for this action, your office is authorized to draw from the firm deposit account number 02-3979. Should you have any questions, or identify any problem, I would appreciate a telephone call so that this matter may be resolved promptly.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: _____

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Enclosure: supplemental declaration

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